

California Bay-Delta Authority

Background

The California Bay-Delta Authority was created by the Legislature in 2002 to oversee implementation of the California Bay-Delta Program, a collaborative effort to improve the quality and reliability of California's water supplies while restoring the San Francisco Bay-Delta ecosystem.

What is the California Bay-Delta Program?

- ❖ The California Bay-Delta Program is in its third year of implementing a 30-year plan to address water supply and ecosystem problems in the Bay-Delta and its watershed. More than \$850 million has been invested to date in local projects to improve water quality, restore habitats, expand storage, strengthen levees and increase water use efficiency.
- ❖ The California Bay-Program has reached several milestones identified in its August 2000 Record of Decision (ROD), and work continues on numerous other program elements. A key focus of the Program in 2003 is site-specific environmental review of an array of proposed actions designed to implement the ROD.
- ❖ Among the proposed actions under review by Bay-Delta agencies are improvements to water conveyance systems in the South Delta, new operations criteria and biological opinions for the State Water Project and federal Central Valley Project and continued operation of the Environmental Water Account. The actions collectively set the stage for the biggest changes in Bay-Delta operations in more than a decade.
- ❖ Bay-Delta agencies also face decision points on potential new surface water storage projects, additional conveyance improvements and ongoing investments in local water quality, ecosystem restoration, water use efficiency and watershed programs.

Bay-Delta Program Record of Decision

- ❖ In August 2000, the Bay-Delta Program issued a Record of Decision (ROD) that set forth a 30-year plan to address ecosystem health and water supply reliability problems in the Bay-Delta. The document laid out specific actions and investments over the first seven years (Stage 1) to meet Program goals. It also described a strategy for implementing the plan and identified complementary actions to be pursued by the Bay-Delta agencies.

Why Focus on the Bay-Delta?

- ❖ The Bay-Delta system provides drinking water for 22 million people. It supports California's trillion-dollar economy, including its \$27 billion agricultural industry.
- ❖ Its levees protect farms, homes and infrastructure. It is the largest estuary on the West Coast and is home to 750 plant and animal species. The Bay-Delta supports 80% of the state's commercial salmon fisheries.
- ❖ Straining under dual roles as crucial habitat and water project crossroads, the Bay-Delta has been in decline from decades of competing demands, no longer functioning as a healthy ecosystem or as a reliable source of water.
- ❖ The Bay-Delta Program was launched to address those problems. The Program is a collaborative effort among 23 state and federal agencies to improve water quality and reliability and the health of the Bay-Delta watershed.

California Bay-Delta Authority: Authorizing Legislation

- ❖ Legislation signed by Governor Davis in 2002 created the California Bay-Delta Authority to oversee implementation of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.
- ❖ Senate Bill 1653 (Costa) specifically charges the Authority with providing accountability, ensuring balanced implementation of the Program, tracking and assessing Program progress, using sound science, assuring public involvement and outreach, and coordinating and integrating related government programs.
- ❖ The legislation provides for the Authority to sunset on January 1, 2006, unless federal legislation has been enacted to authorize the participation of appropriate federal agencies in the Authority.